

Andrew Jackson to Anthony Butler, November 27, 1833, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO COLONEL ANTHONY BUTLER.¹

¹ Univ. of Texas, Butler Papers. The letter is in Jackson's handwriting. A copy is in the Jackson MSS.

Washington, November 27, 1833.

My dear Sir, Your private and confidential letter of the 28th of October last, with your private letter of previous date have been received—but the dispatches referred to in the latter have not come to hand which we regret as we cannot take any measure on the subject of running the boundery line until these dispatches are received or their duplicates arrive.

I have read your confidential letter with care, and astonishment and duly noted its contents—astonishment that you would entrust such a letter, without being in cypher, to the mail, and that you should state in your letter the reply you made “that you had no money” and give for reason, “recollecting that I had authorised you to apply the amount designated for this object in any way according to (my) your discretion as was best calculated to effect the purpose of your mission”—from this it might be construed that my private letters authorised you to apply to corruption, when nothing could be farther from my intention than to convey such an idea.

Your mission was principally to negotiate a commercial treaty, and to fix a permanent boundery between us and Mexico, that would be for the mutual benefit of both and procure for us lasting peace friendship and good will; and if a cession was obtained to have

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it unincumbered by fraudulent grants as that of Florida. for this purpose you received general instructions, and was limited to the maximum of five million dollars for a cession to the grand desert etc. etc. and that the Mexican government might buy in all claims for grants of land in Texas that had been given and whose conditions had not been complied with and transfer to us an unincumbered title, you were left to your discretion in the stipulations of the treaty, if required by Mexico, to stipulate for setting apart such sum as might be thought by the minister of Mexico a just indemnity for them to give to those individuals to satisfy them for such surrender. The consideration named in your instructions [was] not to be exceeded or increased by such stipulation, as the United States could not be interested in the application by Mexico of the consideration to be paid by us—all we wanted was the cession unincumbered by fraudulent grants as Mexico was. This was what your discretion by my private letters was drawn to—but my dear Sir, be careful lest these “ *shrewd fellows* ” may draw you into imputations of attempting to bribe these officers.

The case is a plain, clear one—you are authorised to give five millions of dollars for the cession of Texas as far west as the Grand Desert. if Mexico accepts the offer, but says we have made sundry grants on certain conditions which have not been complied with—justice says the grantees ought to have something for their relinquishment of their grants, therefore on your stipulation that your government will pay to A.B. and C. a certain sum out of the five millions we will cede to the United States all Texas east of the point named, for the ballance of the five millions unincumbered by any grants except Austins, whose conditions are fully complied with. surely under the discretion given you have a right to make this stipulation without bringing upon you or your Government any improper imputations—all the United States is interested in is an unincumbered cession, not how Mexico applies the consideration. Therefore I repeat the best means to secure this object is left to your discretion—but I admonish you to give *these shrewd fellows* no room to charge you with tampering with their officers to obtain the cession thro corruption. Your duty is, in exercising a sound discretion to obtain an unincumbered cession of Texas

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to the boundery named for the consideration limited, and the business of the Mexican Government is, to buy up the incumbrances upon as they can, and you to agree to pay the consideration to be given for the cession to those stipulated in the treaty—we are not interested in her distribution of the consideration. But we are deeply interested that this treaty of cession should be obtained without any just imputation of corruption on our part.

Bring this to a close, I conjure you, as speedily as possible, and if you cannot make a boundery by treaty with the Mexican Government, write us that we may make the necessary communication through you that we will be compelled to run the line as we believe is right and take possession of the country east of the west fork of the Sabine as defined by the treaty with Spain. Before I conclude I cannot help again drawing your attention to your instruction and my private letters—let us have a boundery without the imputation of corruption, and I will hail you welcome with it here— *none else* .

I am very respectfully Yr Humble servant